

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 1) A system for providing audio electronically that is sensitive to a context of a software environment of which the audio is a part, comprising:
 - a. a first computer operatively connected to a data network, the first computer comprising category data representative of a plurality of categories of audio, the categories associatable with a context of executable software;
 - b. a second computer operatively connected to the first computer via the data network, the second computer executing at least a portion of the executable software, the second computer further having access to a plurality of local audio data files, each audio data file being associatable with at least one of the categories; and
 - c. selection software at least a portion of which is executing in the second computer and responsive to category data sent by the first computer in response to the context to select an audio data file local to the second computer for reproduction at the second computer.
- 2) The system of claim 1 wherein the local audio data file is at least one of an audio data file present on a storage medium directly connected to the second computer and an audio data file present on a storage medium accessible to the second computer via a local area network.

- 3) The system of claim 1 wherein the audio data file comprises at least one of music data files and voice data files.
- 4) The system of claim 3 wherein the music data file comprises high quality music data files.
- 5) The system of claim 1 wherein the executable software is game software.
- 6) The system of claim 1 wherein the data network comprises at least one of the Internet accessed via modem, the Internet accessed via routers, and local area networks.
- 7) The system of claim 1, further comprising:
 - a. musical data descriptors local to the first computer; and
 - b. a music generator local to the second computer, the music generator responsive to the music data descriptors to generate music at the second computer.
- 8) The system of claim 6 wherein the musical data descriptors comprise MIDI formatted data.
- 9) The system of claim 6 wherein the musical data descriptors are sent by the first computer to the second computer.

10) The system of claim 1 further comprising categorization software executable at the second computer, the categorization software capable of locating and categorizing audio files accessible to the second computer.

11) The system of claim 10 wherein the categorization software is selected from the group of categorization software consisting of software capabilities in the game application, software external to the game application, and software that comprises one or more operating system services.

12) The system of claim 1 further comprising:

- a. a third computer operatively connected to the first computer via the data network, the third computer executing at least a portion of the executable software, the third computer further having access to a plurality of local audio data files, each audio data file being associated with at least one of the categories, the third computer operatively connected to the second computer via the data communication network; and
- b. selection software at least a portion of which is executing in the third computer and responsive to category data sent by the first computer in response to the context to select an audio data file local to the third computer for reproduction at the third computer.

13) The system of claim 10 wherein:

- a. the first computer is a game server computer;

- b. the executable software is game software; and
- c. the selection software executing in the second computer and the third computer is responsive to category data sent by the first computer to select an audio data file local to the second computer for reproduction at the second computer and to select an audio data file local to the third computer for reproduction at the third computer;
- d. wherein the first computer selects the categories based at least in part on a context of the game software executing in at least one of the second computer and the third computer for game play between the second computer and the third computer.

14) A method of producing audio during execution of software on a system of claim 1, comprising:

- a. at predetermined intervals, determining a context of a state of the software executing in the second computer by the first computer;
- b. selecting a category at the first computer in response to the context, the category associated with the context;
- c. transmitting the category to the second computer;
- d. selection of an audio data file accessible locally to the second computer by the selection software at the second computer in response to the category transmitted to the second computer; and
- e. reproduction of audio using the audio data file by the second computer.

- 15) The method of claim 14, wherein step (b) further comprises:
- i. allowing a user to select a subset of categories from a set of categories;
and
 - ii. allowing the user to associate the selected subset of categories with one or more contexts for use during execution of the executable software at the second computer.
- 16) The method of claim 15, wherein step (b) further comprises storing the associations at the first computer for use during execution of the executable software at the second computer.
- 17) The method of claim 14 wherein the executable software at the second computer comprises audiovisual software.
- 18) The method of claim 14 further comprising creating a set of categories during at least one of concurrently with selection software execution, at the initiation of the selection software, when the selection software is first installed, when the selection software is updated, and periodically at predetermined intervals.
- 19) The method of claim 14 further comprising:
- a. locating audio files accessible to the second computer; and
 - b. categorizing the located audio files into categories compatible with categories transmitted to the second computer.

20) A computer program embodied within a computer-readable medium created using the method of claim 14.